

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-13 AID-20 PC-04 RSR-01 /122 W

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R 081013Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7179

INFO CINCPACREPPHIL

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9070

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: COMELEC PROCLAIMS REFERENDUM RESULTS

REF: MANILA 8616

BEGIN SUMMARY: COMELEC PROCLAIMS 90/67 PERCENT "YES" IN JULY 27-28 REFERENDUM. OVERALL REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN CHARACTERIZED BY BOLD-FACED BUT FAIRLY EFFICIENT COMBINATION OF MASSIVE USE OF MEDIA AND TIGHTLY-CONTROLLED LOCAL ORGANIZATION INTENDED TO INCREASE MARCOS' CONTROL OF CIVIL AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND BEGIN FORMATION OF MASS BASE PERSONALLY RESPONSIVE TO HIM. END SUMMARY.

1. ON AUGUST 3, COMELEC PROCLAIMED THE RESULTS OF THE JULY 27-28 REFERENDUM ON QUESTION "DO YOU WANT PRESIDENT MARCOS TO CONTINUE BEYOND 1973 AND FINISH THE REFORMS HE HAS INITIATED UNDER MARTIAL LAW?" "YES" VOTES WERE 90.67 PERCENT OF A TOTAL OF 19.9 MILLION VOTES CAST, WHILE "NO" VOTES EQUALLED 9.33 PERCENT. "YES" VOTES TOTALLED 18 MILLION AND "NO" VOTES 1.85 MILLION. THE
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15 TO 18-YEAR AGE BRACKET, WHICH WAS TALLIED SEPARATELY

FROM THE 18 AND ABOVE, YIELDED ROUGHLY SIMILAR PERCENTAGES. THOUGH SOME VOTES REMAIN TO BE COUNTED, COMELEC CONSIDERS THEY WILL NO LONGER AFFECT THE RESULTS SIGNIFICANTLY.

2. COMMENT: PERCENTAGE "YES" VOTES HAS LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE AND NOT EVEN MARCOS CAN HAVE ACCURATE CONCEPTION OF WHAT FREE VOTE MIGHT HAVE BEEN. FORMULATION OF QUESTION AND LACK OF ANY CHOICE LED MANY OBSERVERS TO ASSUME MARCOS MIGHT HAVE REACHED A TRUE MAJORITY, EVEN IF ELECTION NOT MESSIVELY STAGE-MANAGED AND IMPROPERLY INFLUENCED. REPORTED IRREGULARITIES IN SECRET BALLOT PROCEDURES AND ELEMENT OF FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES OF VOTING "NO", HOWEVER, UNDOUBTEDLY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED THIS MAJORITY. OTHER REPORTS SUGGEST VOTE TOTALS FIXED IN ADVANCE. IN ANY CASE, WELL-KNOWN MARCOS TENDENCY TO OVERKILL, AS WELL AS SAME TENDENCY BUILT INTO SYSTEM BY DESIRE MARCOS' LOCAL LIEUTENANTS TO PROVE FIDELITY, WAS AGAIN IN EVIDENCE, AND PROBABLY WAS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ON BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC SCENE WITH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS FILIPINOS REPORTEDLY RESENTFUL OF BEING FORCED TAKE PART IN CHARADE.

3. EMPHASIS IN TONE OF MARCOS' REMARKS IN RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE (SEPTTEL) ON CORRECTION OF MILITARY, AS WELL AS CIVILIAN, "BACKSLIDING" SUGGEST MILITARY MAY BE A MAJOR TARGET OF ANNOUNCED PERSONNEL "PURGE" EFFORTS. INDEED, BETWEEN REPORTS OF INCREASING CORRUPTION IN THE MILITARY AND DEVELOPING MILITARY MORALE PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH, ONE OF PURPOSES OF JULY 27 REFERENDUM MAY HAVE BEEN TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OF ENTIRE ESTABLISHMENT, PARTICULARLY WITH A VIEW TO MAINTAINING CONTINUING FIRM CONTROL OF MILITARY. AS MANAGED AS BARANGAY ORGANIZATION IS IN ITS MUCH TOUTED ROLE OF CONDUIT FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND LEADERSHIP, IT OBVIOUSLY PLAYS IMPORTANT PART IN MARCOS' PLANS FOR ATTEMPTED ORGANIZATION MASS BASE OF SUPPORT PERSONALLY RESPONSIVE TO HIM. BARANGAY LEADERS ARE PICKED MARCOS PEOPLE WHO HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE ENERGY AND TALENT IN INITIAL ORGANIZING EFFORTS, IF NOT IN PRODUCTION OF MASS ENTHUSIASM.

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4. IN PAST WEEKS, MEDIA DEVOTED ITS RESOURCES ALMOST ENTIRELY TO REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. BREATHLESS, POLYANNISH PRESENTATION "NEWS" AND "COMMENT", REPEATED AD NAUSEAM, REPORTEDLY TURNED OFF MANY SOPHISTICATED FILIPINOS, BUT WAS OBVIOUSLY, INTENDED CONTINUE DEVELOP PATTERNS OF PERCEPTION AMONG POPULACE CONSONANT WITH MARCOS' GOALS. EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS EFFORT NOT YET APPARENT.

SULLIVAN

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